



Impact of Myasthenia Gravis on Sailors and Marines

Empowering Patients and Providers to Manage Risk and Improve Healthcare

Background

In February of 2011, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a new black box warning label on fluoroquinolone medications regarding a recently identified risk for those with myasthenia gravis. Myasthenia gravis is an autoimmune disorder that causes muscle weakness and fatigue. The warning alerts patients to the potential worsening of symptoms if taking fluoroquinolones, a commonly prescribed antibiotic. An estimated 400 Sailors, Marines or their family members were diagnosed with myasthenia gravis between fiscal years 2006 and 2012. Though myasthenia gravis is rare, no cure exists.



Operating Forward

The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center's (NMCPHC) Health Analysis (HA) Department contacted Navy Medicine Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) patients with myasthenia gravis via mail, notifying them of the safety warning. HA also provided guidance to contact their individual primary care managers, and created a wallet card patients could take with them to appointments, empowering their direct communication with health care providers. Shortly after the letters were mailed, Capt. Paul Rockswold, Head of HA and a Navy Medicine family physician received a call from a concerned family member of a myasthenia gravis patient who had noticed an unfortunate worsening of symptoms in their loved one.

"It was great to hear that HA's efforts made an impact," said Capt. Rockswold, "We want to empower Sailors, Marines and their families in managing their health by providing information and resources to make informed decisions. We believe this empowerment can positively affect the quality of life and the care delivered in our MTFs."

HA provides expertise and leadership to improve the value of Navy health care and operational force readiness through clinical health analysis, epidemiologic, and evidence-based methods. The department encourages health care professionals to contact them to suggest additional areas for quality improvement efforts. For more on the NMCPHC's Health Analysis Department visit: <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-analysis/>.

Resources

- NMCPHC Health Analysis Department: <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-analysis/>
- Myasthenia Gravis Information: <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-analysis/Pages/notifications.aspx>
- Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America, Inc.: <http://www.myasthenia.org/>

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